



Mississippi Works: **WIOA** Newsletter

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This newsletter will provide weekly updates regarding Mississippi's WIOA planning process. Our state will be an early implementer and will submit a combined plan on September 1, 2015.

Can you define Mississippi's sector strategies?

As our WIOA workgroups continue to meet, many have been asked to define our sector strategies. These are workforce strategies based on data analysis of employment and unemployment data, labor market trends, and the educational and skill level of the state's workforce. Please provide your thoughts and feedback to James Williams at jwilliams@swdb-ms.org.

Weekly Update:

Performance and Accountability Workgroup

The Performance and Accountability group met Tuesday, June 30, to work toward developing a reporting system that will streamline the performance evaluation process. WIOA increases accountability and places stronger emphasis on results through the establishment of common employment outcome measures across all WIOA programs included in the combined plan. The workgroup reviewed the six performance indicators and discussed how each measurement impacts each core program.

Currently, each program has its own definition of a "participation period" within the workforce system. Under WIOA, a common measurement is required across programs with well-defined entry

and exit points. Median earning of participants is another performance indicator that core programs must determine. Although job seekers can choose their own path, the workforce system must counsel job seekers on obtaining higher-level skills to meet the overarching goal of closing the middle-skill gap. The state will be measured on its performance in educating and training workers under WIOA to meet the needs of employers seeking middle-skill workers.

The law also requires the state to measure incremental steps or benchmarks that job seekers must take to obtain a recognized postsecondary credential or a secondary school diploma (or its recognized equivalent). Therefore, the workforce system must not only enroll job seekers into a training program but also ensure that the training program is successful and show evidence of placing people on a path to obtain higher credentials that result in higher wages. Several of the workgroups have already determined that WorkKeys will be the recognized statewide credential.



The final performance indicator will be determined by the Department of Labor, which will establish parameters for employer participation. The state will develop a plan with the understanding that the plan will be modified once DOL issues guidelines.

Dr. "Mimmo" Parisi leads the performance and accountability workgroup in a discussion about WIOA's new performance indicators.

The group determined that all of the performance indicators will be communicated through MDES's technology, which is already in place. By the end of July, a conceptual policy plan and timeline will outline how all of the systems will share data, create reports, etc. There will also be a dashboard that allows workforce partners to view the status of performance indicators in real time. Finally, there will be a notification system in place to ensure continuous progress.

The group was asked to provide feedback on the six performance indicators. There are plans to reconvene once the policy plan is finalized at the end of July.

Sector Strategies Workgroup



MDA Executive Director Glen McCullough discusses Mississippi's workforce training needs with the Sector Strategies Workgroup.

The Sector Strategies Workgroup also met on Tuesday, June 30, to ensure the appropriate economic data and analyses are easily accessible for informed decision-making pertaining to WIOA. The group started a conversation about developing sector workforce strategies based on analysis of workforce, employment, and unemployment data, labor market trends, and the educational and skill level of our state's workforce.

The group discussed regional sector strategies and how that would tie into the state's overall plan. To make the best use of state resources, the group concurred that the state should focus on targeted sectors backed by solid data analysis to make the most significant impact. In addition, data analysis will give a clearer picture of which sectors are the best return on investment.

Currently, the state's primary target industries are:

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Aerospace
- Agribusiness
- Automotive
- Energy
- Healthcare
- Shipbuilding
- Tourism and Film

The state's secondary target industries are:

- Distribution and Warehousing
- Data Centers and IT

All of the sector strategies must tie back to the career pathways. If additional funding is invested in specific sector strategies, the workforce system should promote opportunities in these sectors, which would be mutually beneficial to employers and job seekers. Advancing our workforce participants so that they can have living wages and become self-sufficient is the highest measure of success. These new performance measures will provide the state an opportunity to improve its focus and align workforce training resources more effectively across all programs.

Sector Strategy partners include: Mississippi Department of Rehabilitation Services, local workforce areas, community colleges, Mississippi Department of Education, Institutes of Higher Learning, Mississippi Department of Employment Security, Mississippi Development Authority, Mississippi Department of Human Services, community-based organizations, and employers. All of these partners and the Governor will sign off on the plan.

Timeline

Business Focus Group

Wednesday, July 8 – 10:00 AM at Mississippi Department of Information Technology, 3771 Eastwood Drive, Jackson, MS

SWIB Meeting and 2nd Public Forum

Wednesday, July 22 – 5:30 PM at Mississippi Department of Education Central High School Auditorium, 359 North West Street, Jackson, MS

SWIB Meeting and 3rd Public Forum

Friday, August 14 – 10:00 AM at the Jackson Convention Complex, 105 E. Pascagoula Street, Jackson, MS

**In addition, WIOA Planning Meetings are held every Friday at 10 a.m. at NSPARC on the campus of Mississippi State University.*

Contact

For more information, visit the WIOA tab on our web site at <http://swib.ms.gov/>.

Questions? Contact James Williams at 601-321-6046 or jwilliams@swdb-ms.org.